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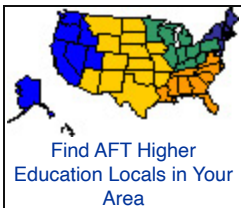


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Statement on Part-Time Faculty Employment

Prepared by the AFT Higher Education Program and Policy Council Task Force on Part-Time Faculty

I. The Nature of the Problem

A. Background

In April of 1979, the AFT Executive Council approved a Statement on Part-Time Faculty Employment. Despite many gains for part-time faculty negotiated by AFT locals in the period since 1979 in the areas of salary, rights to continuance of employment, and benefits, the dependence by many institutions of higher education on inexpensive, part-time faculty is more pronounced than ever. This Statement is an update of the earlier document.

Higher education has experienced a dramatic increase in the employment of nontenure-stream part-time faculty. While the practice began in the 1960's, during a time of burgeoning enrollments and unprecedented expansion, it continues to thrive in times of economic crisis. From 1971 to 1986, the number of part-time faculty increased by 133 percent while the full-time faculty had only increased 22 percent. This trend has continued into the 1990's. A major shift to reliance on part-time faculty has spread throughout U.S. higher education.

As a steady stream of qualified academics continues to enter the job market, as tenure-stream positions dry up, as administrators decide not to open new positions based primarily on considerations of cost and not educational need or desirability, and as more and more faculty are denied tenure, the number of part-time faculty continues to grow. This trend is likely to continue unless major interventive actions are taken by the AFT and others.

The increased use of part-time faculty has been well documented in recent years. In particular, the AFT "Part-Time Faculty Issues" brief developed by Perry Robinson described in some detail the dimensions of the problem: disproportionately low pay, lack of health benefit coverage, exclusion from participation in curriculum and departmental policy development, lack of security of employment and the resulting loss of academic freedom, and the lack of connection to the academic community required of any professional educator. The AFT must take up the continuing task of educating the academic community about this exploited group of educational workers. The welfare and professionalism of all faculty depend upon recognizing the status of part-time faculty and their use and abuse as colleagues.

The rising tide of part-time employment is not limited to higher education. The dilemma of part-time employment - the majority of which is a result of involuntary underemployment - is becoming epidemic in the United States. Involuntary underemployment coupled with unemployment and the seemingly endless series of layoffs by major corporations and industries is one of the most serious problems today facing our nation. Higher education's movement toward part-time employment is just one example of this overall trend.

B. Confusing Nomenclature Terms of Appointment and Salary

Part-time faculty are designated by myriad titles and are classified by a confusing variety of appointments and salary terms, so that comparison among them is difficult. They are called "adjuncts," "special lecturers," "acting faculty," "wage-section faculty,"

"hourly," "short-term," "emergency," and "temporary" employees - despite the obvious potential for abuse latent in these appellations. Their salaries are usually but a fraction of those of full-time, tenure-stream faculty of equal qualifications. While often hired year after year, they are commonly appointed for one term only, paid by the course or credit hour, and denied benefits and regular increments. While usually held to workloads below those of full-time faculty, many nontenure-stream part-time instructors carry teaching loads equal to or greater than those of full-time faculty. (See note, below.)

Note: Because of the multiplicity of ways of classifying and compensating nontenure-stream faculty, the term "part-time" will be defined here as any member of an institution's instructional or professional staff employed outside the tenure stream and at a salary and under conditions disproportionate to those of full-time, tenure-stream faculty of comparable qualifications and experience. While most carry less than a full-time load, some have workloads equivalent to those of full-time employees. A related problem which is not addressed in this paper concerns temporary full-time employees whose terms and conditions of employment resemble those of part-time employees.

C. Kinds of Employees

The most drastic increases in part-time hiring have occurred in liberal arts programs, and in community colleges. Although part-time employment began typically as an urban phenomenon because of the number of unemployed academics in cities, some of the largest university systems have also come to rely on part-timers, particularly those universities without large doctoral programs that provide teaching assistants. In addition to serving as vocational and laboratory instructors, part-time-faculty are often concentrated in remedial and beginning skills programs such as basic mathematics and English composition - ironically those courses essential to the student's future academic success.

D. Problems associated with part-time teaching

1. Impact on students and educational quality: We reject the simplistic argument that the "part-time problem" is the inadequacy of the part-time faculty members themselves; rather, it is their exploited status which lies at the root of the problem. Nonetheless, an unfair two-layer employment situation does have detrimental effects on students and the quality of the instruction and services that they receive. Alienated and demoralized faculty members, always conscious of their vulnerability, cannot bring into the classroom the confidence and creativity necessary for the best teaching. Instructors called up at the last minute, using someone else's choice of texts, cannot do their best work. Faculty members unable to plan for the future are less effective in courses designed to follow in sequence. Uninformed of departmental/institutional policies and procedures, part-time faculty cannot serve as liaisons between the student and the institution. They are less able to advise students, even though they often teach courses largely subscribed by part-time students and/or students with learning and literacy disabilities - that is, students with the greatest need for well-informed instructors who are fully privileged members of the institution. The adverse conditions under which the part-time faculty work makes it difficult for them to be the professional role models for their students that they would aspire to be.

2. Impact on part-time faculty: Part-time faculty work is attractive to some faculty. It allows for the time and energy to pursue other professional and personal interests while simultaneously providing some steady income. There is a need for a limited number of part-time positions especially in areas where a limited number of courses are offered or very narrow expertise is required. While part-time employment could be beneficial to some, the actual situation reveals widespread exploitation of a large body of highly qualified academics who are trying to earn a living through faculty employment. The great majority of part-timers lack job security, receive disproportionately low salaries, are placed in a demeaning status, and are denied the normal

benefits and perquisites of faculty employment. For many, the years of low status and shoddy treatment results in a devastating loss of professionalism and self-esteem. Part-time faculty perceive that length of experience, superior qualifications and extra-classroom achievements are unlikely to improve their condition - indeed, part-time status may even be held against them. These are not the conditions conducive to good teaching or collegial relations with other faculty.

3. Impact on full-time faculty: It is important that higher education institutions are staffed primarily by a cadre of permanent tenured faculty. The exploding reliance on part-time faculty thus not only is a threat to full-time faculty employment opportunities - and a bar to the development of the next generation of full-time faculty - but it also poses a threat to institutional quality. The existence of a large pool of reserve labor is a threat to any group of workers; part-time faculty provide the cheap, no-strings-attached labor which makes it unnecessary to declare regular positions open, enables an institution to staff classes even though faculty are denied tenure, reduces the proportion of a department entrusted with decision making, and intensifies the burden of committee work and departmental governance for full-time faculty. Exploitation of "second-class" faculty is destructive to the morale of all faculty. Until this is recognized and the exploitation ended, the large number of part-time faculty will remain a potential threat to the dignity and security of the entire profession.

E. Summary

We are concerned as a union with the protection of dignity of work in general and of the faculty professions in particular. Substandard working conditions and the exploitation of any member of our profession imperils the entire academic community.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force on Part-Time College and University Faculty of the American Federation of Teachers makes the following proposals for the elimination of abuses of part-time nontenure-track and/or hourly paid or adjunct faculty and for their more rapid organization into collective bargaining units.

A. Management policy consideration

1. Limitations on the use of part-time faculty

a. Limitation on total number of student hours taught by part-time faculty: The use of part-time members of the instructional staff should be limited to the minimum necessary to enrich the curriculum and to enable the institution to respond to fluctuations in enrollment. Therefore, only a small proportion of the total faculty should be in the part-time ranks. These part-time faculty members should serve a severely limited amount of Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES).

b. Elimination of "splintering" full-time positions into several part-time positions: Part-time faculty should not be used to provide teaching or professional services formerly performed by full-time faculty. Conversion of full-time positions into several part-time positions must be stopped. The continual downsizing of the full-time faculty through attrition, coupled with replacement by part-timers, is a flawed and short-sighted management strategy that weakens the institution at its heart - its continuing full-time faculty.

c. Limitation on number of persons teaching part-time in addition to full-time employment: Persons employed full-time in addition to their part-time teaching should be strictly limited in the number of courses taught part-time during the regular academic year. Concern for quality of instruction and students' need for adequate time and attention from their teachers cause us to prohibit an overburdened work force.

2. Conditions of employment for part-time faculty

a. Rank: The same criteria used for determining rank and eligibility for promotion of full-time faculty should also apply to part-time faculty.

b. Responsibilities: Part-time faculty should be allowed the opportunity to participate in the full range of professional responsibilities, including student advisement, committee work, departmental and faculty meetings. They should be paid for such involvement.

c. Salary: Salary for part-time faculty should be proportionate to the salary of full-time faculty of the same qualifications doing the same work.

d. Benefits: Part-time faculty working at less than 50 percent of the average full-time load should receive a minimum of 50 percent of the benefits available to full-time faculty. Part-time faculty performing service for 50 percent or more of this load should receive full benefits.

e. Contracts: Part-time faculty should be hired well in advance of the first day of classes - at least one month before the first day of classes should be an absolute minimum. Only in genuine emergencies should instructors be hired on shorter notice. If a part-time teacher prepares a course which is canceled for any reason s/he must be compensated for such preparation.

f. Job Security: Notwithstanding the often asserted need for "flexibility" in the academic community, it is incumbent upon the institution to provide all its employees with a minimum of security in their work.

(1) Probation: A period of time should be determined for the evaluation of part-time faculty, after which they shall have achieved seniority. Although it may require several terms for such evaluation, unbroken service should not be a requirement.

(2) Seniority: After the probationary period is completed, the part-time faculty member should be placed on a departmental part-time seniority list for future appointments with full credit for previous service. Those not reappointed will be drawn first from part-time faculty still on probation and then from the bottom of the seniority list.

(3) Termination: Termination of a part-time faculty member with seniority must be for cause, with appropriate due process procedures.

(4) Unemployment compensation: Part-time faculty should have the right to unemployment compensation at the termination of their contracts.

(5) Conversion to full-time status: When a full-time position opens, qualified part-time faculty should be given priority consideration in accordance with seniority and the requirements of the position.

3. Role of part-time faculty in the department

a. Hiring: Part-time faculty should be initially hired with the same care and should be subjected to the same interview process as is given any other applicant to the department.

b. Orientation: Upon initial appointment, part-time faculty should be fully advised of their contractual rights and responsibilities, introduced to the institution and to the department, their governance and structure, and the department's requirements and expectations regarding the successful performance of their part-time duties.

c. Role in departmental governance: Part-time faculty should be invited to participate in departmental meetings with voting privileges. They should also have the opportunity of serving on committees and performing other duties normally assigned to their full-time colleagues.

d. Professional rights: Part-time faculty should be permitted to order their own texts and design their own courses, unless these are departmental decisions, in which case part-time faculty should be invited to participate in the deliberations.

e. Privileges and amenities: Part-time faculty should be given perquisites and privileges appropriate to their professional status and necessary for the effective fulfillment of their duties. These include office space, mailboxes, secretarial help, supplies, regular identification cards, library and other campus privileges.

B. Union policy considerations

1. The need for solidarity: Full-time faculty must regard part-time faculty as colleagues in the academic community. They must see part-time faculty as exploited members of the same labor force, and must see part-timers as like themselves except in being more vulnerable to manipulation by management. Solidarity between full-time and part-time faculty should be an important goal for AFT locals.

2. Implications of faculty unionism: The heavy dependence upon part-time faculty, which may once have had "innocent" beginnings, is becoming more and more obviously a form of administrative resistance to faculty unionism. A reserve army of unorganized, noncontract faculty members can destroy the rights and prerogatives which faculty have fought for and have gained through collective bargaining. If a faculty union is to have maximum effectiveness, all teaching personnel should be

covered by one contract. Barring that, the part- and full-time units should be closely coordinated. Part-time faculty must be protected by the same regulations and granted the same rewards and dignity as those enjoyed by their full-time colleagues.

3. Educating the profession

a. Fighting the myth: The acceptance of an invidious stereotype often acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because of ignorance and institutional attempts to obscure the truth of the part-timers' qualifications and working conditions, many full-time faculty perceive their part-time colleagues with disdain and distrust. In addition, many full-time faculty are neither aware of the plight of their part-time colleagues, nor concerned by the dangers implicit in it to themselves and to the profession.

b. Educational campaign: The American Federation of Teachers should undertake a nationwide educational campaign presenting the monumental growth of part-time faculty employment and its abuse. This campaign should describe the part-time group and the conditions under which they are employed; it should dispel the disparaging myths concerning part-time faculty, such as their alleged lack of credentials. The campaign should be directed toward informing the general public, as well as the higher education community, concerning the importance of maintaining a corps of full-time professional faculty to keep higher education strong, as well as the importance of ensuring fair treatment of part-time faculty and career ladders for them into full-time employment.

4. Bargaining unit: Management gains the advantage when negotiating by dividing the labor force or by having a large pool of unemployed workers in reserve. To prevent the manipulation of the labor force, the union must present a united front. This is especially true in institutions traditionally structured in a hierarchical fashion. Higher education bargaining units should represent both full- and part-time members of the faculty and organized professional staff. Whenever possible, the AFT should attempt to represent all employees in higher educational institutions.

5. Organizational privileges for part-time faculty: In those instances when part-time and full-time faculty belong to the same local, part-time faculty should be fully integrated into the activities of the local. This should include membership on executive councils as well as on negotiations teams.

6. Dues for part-time faculty: Dues to locals and per capita to state affiliates and the AFT should be structured so that part-time members are not forced to pay a disproportionate percentage of income in dues in order to be members. Locals should have an economic incentive

to sign up part-time members. Dues and per capita structures should not act as a disincentive to part-timer membership.

7. Organization and orientation of part-time faculty: A vigorous organizing drive to identify, recruit, and mobilize part-time faculty at every institution should be undertaken by individual locals through their chapter structures. In states where part-time faculty eligibility for coverage under state labor laws is limited (Illinois) or completely denied (Ohio), AFT state federations and locals should seek legislative changes to provide coverage. In states where legislation has yet to pass or is incomplete, AFT should carefully monitor the definition of covered employee" in any legislation proposed. Part-timers are the academic world's version of contingent worker," whose lack of coverage under Federal legislation, including the National Labor Relations Act, has been identified as a major problem by the AFL-CIO. Chapter union leaders should help to initiate orientation sessions each semester, to help integrate the part-time faculty into the academic community and to help educate them as to the rights and privileges they are entitled to through collective bargaining.

8. Unemployment benefits: The union should assist part-time faculty in their unemployment claims upon the expiration of their employment. Where needed, the AFT should seek legislation to allow part-time faculty to be eligible for unemployment benefits during those periods of time when they are not on the college payroll or employed elsewhere.

9. Part-time professor: When negotiating contracts, locals should consider the possibility of creating a title less than full-time with tenure, in rank, pro-rata salary, and other benefits described in this document for part-time personnel. Caution should be taken that such part-time positions not be used to replace full-time tenured positions. This position will be realizable when a limitation on the exploitation of part-time faculty is achieved. A priority should be given to part-time faculty when these appointments are made.

10. Accreditation: The AFT should put pressure on accrediting agencies to include specific standards with regard to the status and use of part-time faculty.

C. Conclusion

The committee acknowledges the difficulties inherent in organizing our part-time colleagues. All the factors discussed in the paper, including the status of the part-time faculty, their abuse, the lack of job security, their alienation and powerlessness, all contribute to the difficulty of reaching and organizing them. The task will be facilitated by a policy that will appeal to our colleagues who are currently exploited.